

PURIFICATION OF SEWAGE.

A valuable contribution to the literature on the disposal and purification of sewage has just been issued by the United States Geological Survey as Water-Supply and Irrigation Paper No. 185, investigations on the purification of Boston sewage, with a history of the sewage-disposal problem; by C. E. A. Winslow and E. B. Phelps. The volume of sewage discharged by modern communities is so large and the character of all kinds of sewage is always so objectionable that the so-called sewage-disposal problem becomes, from the economic as well as the sanitary point of view, one of the most serious with which American cities have to deal. It is of vital importance to every community to secure such a disposal of obnoxious sewage as will avoid the creation of any insanitary focus or foci in the environment, or any infringement of the laws of hygiene and sanitation.

The investigations described in this publication were made at the Sanitary Research Laboratory and Sewage Experiment Station of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, under the direction of Prof. William T. Sedgwick. The station at which the work was carried on is situated on the line of the main trunk sewer of the South Metropolitan district of Boston at a point where it contains the sewage of about half a million people. At this station pumps were installed and tanks were constructed for tests of the various methods of sewage purification. The results of this work and the practical conclusions that have been drawn are given in Water Supply Paper No. 185, which may be obtained on application to the Director of the United States Geological Survey, Washington, D. C. These results are by no means applicable merely to large cities, but contain lessons of practical value to all communities having to deal with the ever present sewage disposal problem. The description of the experiments is preceded by a careful and elaborate historical review of the whole sewage-disposal problem from its origin in the wide adoption of the water-carriage system up to the present time, when that system has become practically universal. This interesting review can not fail to be of the highest value to expert engineers, sewage commissioners, and cities all over the United States, especially to those numerous small communities that are confronted, perhaps for the first time, with a problem that means so much for the health as well as the finances of the citizens.

COLONIES FOR EPILEPTICS.

To the editor of the State Journal: As you are aware, great advances have been made in recent years in the care and treatment of epileptics. It has been found that their welfare and that of the community is best promoted by providing special institutions for them on the colony or village plan. There are a number of such colonies in Europe and at least fifteen of our own states have made or are making colony provision for indigent and semi-dependent epileptics. By means of colony life the condition of these persons may be improved and their capacity for self-support increased.

There being in California no special provision for epileptics, representative citizens of Los Angeles met on October 29, 1906, to consider the needs of this unfortunate class. At this meeting a committee was appointed to investigate and report upon the condition of epileptics throughout the state as a step toward bettering this condition. This committee is now engaged in gathering data concerning the number of epileptics in this State, both in and out of institutions. All medical practitioners are urged to send to this committee the names or initials of any epileptics whom they may know, together with whatever information may seem to be of value concerning them.

As chairman of this committee, I am writing to you to enlist your cooperation in furthering the matter. If you will be so kind as to give space to this communication I shall be greatly indebted to you.

Yours very truly, ROSS MOORE, M. D.

COUNTY SOCIETIES.

SONOMA COUNTY.

The Sonoma County Medical Society held its first meeting of the year in Dr. S. S. Bogle's office, Santa Rosa, on January 10th. Notwithstanding the inclement weather, a generous number were present. The officers-elect for the ensuing year were installed: President, Dr. J. R. Swisher, of Healdsburg; Vice-President, Dr. J. H. McLeod; Secretary, Dr. R. M. Bonar; Treasurer, Dr. Lizzie Lain, all of Santa Rosa.

The society is in a prosperous condition, and the past year has been replete with interest. A unanimous vote of thanks was accorded Dr. Annabel McG. Stuart, the retiring President, who, notwithstanding the arduous demands of a large practice, did not miss a meeting during her term of service, nor waver in her zeal in the interests of a united profession in Sonoma county.

To Dr. G. W. Mallory, who has been our Secretary since the society was organized, over three years ago, belongs the credit, more than to any other member, for our flourishing condition. He has worked earnestly and faithfully for our welfare and could always be depended upon to be there.

The feature of the evening was a paper by Dr. E. M. Yates, on "Endometritis." After the discussion, in which every member took an active part, the society adjourned.

R. M. BONAR,
Secretary.

ORANGE COUNTY.

The Orange County Medical Society held its regular monthly meeting Tuesday evening, January 8th. State Senator Anderson requested advice in regard to the bill to regulate the practice of "Naturopathy." A Committee on Legislation was appointed and instructed to keep our representatives advised in regard to such legislation. The committee has written them that this bill, if passed, would defeat the objects of all past medical legislation, inasmuch as it would admit all pretenders to practice. Dr. Dobson read a very interesting paper on a greatly neglected subject, "Ocular Manifestations in Cerebral Lesions," showing how this symptom could not be utilized without a thorough knowledge of the anatomy of the brain and the origin of the ocular nerves.

H. S. GORDON,
Secretary.

SHASTA COUNTY.

Shasta County Medical Society met in regular session January 19th at the office of Dr. R. F. Wallace. President C. E. Reed in the chair. There were present Drs. Reed, Wallace, Bauter, White, Lawry, Edgcomb and Weber. Communication was received from Dr. George Worthington asking to be transferred to San Francisco County Medical Society, and Dr. George Watt to Yolo Society. Granted. The communication from Dr. Robert T. Legge inviting the society to have its July meeting at McCloud was accepted.

The Secretary and Treasurer's report for the past year was accepted. Resolution reaffirming vaccination was adopted as follows:

Resolved, That Shasta County Medical Society hereby reaffirms and emphasizes its belief in proper vaccination as a protection against smallpox and that

it is of the decided opinion that inoculation with pure vaccine and with absolute cleanliness and good sanitary surroundings is a harmless and innocent measure.

The following names were selected, from which the special Senatorial Committee of this district could be chosen, viz.: Chas. W. Nutting, Robt. T. Legge, C. E. Reed, R. F. Wallace, Fred Stabel, D. B. Fields, Chas. M. Tinsman and C. J. Teass.

Robt. T. Legge and L. A. Bauter were elected delegates and Drs. Cornish and Edgecomb alternates to the April meeting of the State Society. Officers for the ensuing year were then installed as follows: R. F. Wallace, President; R. E. Stevenson, Vice-President; Phil H. Weber, Secretary and Treasurer.

Dr. C. E. Reed read a very interesting paper on "Erysipelas Migrans," which was followed by a general discussion by all doctors present. The society then adjourned to April 20, 1907.

PHIL H. WEBER,
Secretary.

SOMNOS.

The manufacturers of Somnos have been claiming that their preparation is a definite "chemical product formed by the synthesis of chlorthanal with a polyatomic alcohol radical. Very few, if any, physicians who read this description realized that chlorthanal is another name for chloral and that a polyatomic alcohol radical, in this instance, meant glycerin. In The Journal of the American Medical Association for September 1, 1906, attention is called to the actual facts in regard to this preparation in a comment on the circular letter published by the H. K. Mulford Company. In the literature regarding the physiologic action of Somnos the H. K. Mulford Company claimed that it has no "depressive action on the heart or circulation and has no destructive influence on the red corpuscles of the blood, nor does it cause gastric disturbances by continued use." The literature also repeatedly said that it contained no chloral and that it was free from the bad effects of chloral.

The Council of Pharmacy and Chemistry, in The Journal A. M. A. for September 15, publishes a report of investigations that were made on mice, guinea-pigs and dogs for the purpose of proving or disproving the claims made for Somnos by its manufacturers. The result of the investigation showed that the physiologic action of Somnos is practically indistinguishable from that of a 5 per cent solution of chloral hydrate.

According to the reports, Somnos is no less toxic than chloral hydrate, and the depressing effects on the temperature, respiration and circulation are the same in each instance. The Council suggests that physicians who are in the habit of using Somnos should compare the results they obtain from it with a 5 per cent elixir of hydrate of chloral. In this way they can verify for themselves whether or not the Council's conclusions are correct, that a 5 per cent elixir of chloral glycerate (Somnos) has the same physiological and therapeutical action as a 5 per cent elixir of chloral hydrate.

THE BACTERIA IN SCARLATINAL AND NORMAL THROATS.

From a study of 154 throat cultures, 51 from normal throats, 75 from cases of scarlatina, 14 of measles, 5 of tonsillitis, 5 of pneumonia and 4 of pharyngitis, and fully describing his method and the results of the examination, G. F. Ruediger, Chicago (Journal A. M. A., October 13), sums up his findings in substance as follows: Streptococcus pyogenes is constantly and abundantly found on the tonsils in cases of tonsillitis and scarlatina before the subsidence of the inflammation in the throat.

The organisms rapidly decrease in numbers after subsidence of the throat inflammation. Streptococcus pyogenes can not be considered a normal resident of all healthy throats, though it was found in small numbers in 60 per cent. of the cases examined. Pneumococci of low virulence were found in 64 out of 71 throats. A large group of organisms lying between the typical Streptococcus pyogenes and pneumococcus were found in all normal throats and in nearly all diseased throats. They have very little virulence for rabbits, and as they are found in nearly all cases they may be considered as normal inhabitants of the throat. Streptococcus pyogenes from normal throats appears to have a slightly greater virulence than these organisms from scarlatinal throats.

PUBLICATIONS.

A Text-Book of Clinical Microscopy and Clinical Chemistry for Medical Students, Laboratory Workers and Practitioners of Medicine. By Charles Phillips Emerson, A. B., M. D., Resident Physician, The Johns Hopkins Hospital; Associate in Medicine, The Johns Hopkins University, Philadelphia and London, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1906.

The field of clinical pathology or clinical microscopy has been very fully covered by several excellent text-books in the last few years, and it would seem that further additions to the list were unnecessary. In presenting another book on this subject Dr. Emerson has recognized this fact, and as he states in his preface, has endeavored to cover the field from a new point of view; to present the subject from the clinical rather than the laboratory side. In this, we think, he has succeeded admirably. The work is based on the author's five years' experience as head of the clinical laboratory at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and he has had at his disposal and made good use of all of the valuable clinical records of this institution. In general the laboratory side of the work is presented much as in other works except that the old and poorer, and the new and untried tests are in general omitted, and only the reliable ones retained. In addition, in every chapter is a valuable and generally full discussion of the clinical side of the subject; a discussion that can not fail to be of advantage to students and to which the general practitioner can refer with the assurance of help.

The work opens with the subject of the sputum and the author makes a timely plea for more extended and careful examinations of the fresh sputum, both macroscopically and microscopically than are usually made. The chapter contains a good discussion of colored sputa and of the sputum in the various pulmonary affections. Following this some two hundred pages are devoted to the subject of the urine. This chapter is very satisfactory. It covers the chemical side in much the same manner as other books but contains here and there many useful hints. The newer urine tests such as cryoscopy, chloride excretion, the dilution test, methylene blue and phlorizin tests, etc., are grouped under the head of functional renal diagnosis and are fully discussed especially in their relation to surgical questions. Albuminuria and the urine in the various renal affections are fully considered from the clinical standpoint and must certainly be of great help to the student. We are sorry no mention is made of Denig's test for acetone, for we consider it just as simple and more delicate and satisfactory than the usual Gunning's or Lieben's tests.

The third chapter considers the stomach contents and in its general presentation of the subject and its discussion of the clinical laboratory side of the different gastric affections it is one of the best in